FY25 Budget Discussion: Instruction & Innovation

School Committee
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Needham Public Schools

World Languages: STAMP Assessment, Grade 11

- **What is it?** A **STA**ndardized **M**easurement of **P**roficiency that:
  - Assesses what student *can do* in French/Spanish/Mandarin/Latin by communicative skill
  - Is adaptive. The test changes to become more or less difficult as a student progresses
  - Is approved by DESE to qualify for the Massachusetts State Seal of Biliteracy
  - Provides quality, personalized, actionable feedback in a timely student- and teacher-friendly manner
- **Data-Driven Decision Making -** Results are used to:
  - Inform department-wide skill focus and set learning targets by course
  - Support student goal setting and reflection for continuous growth
  - Fortify common practices among teachers including proficiency-based grading
    - Formative, mastery-oriented feedback
- **Level Service Request:** $1,442.70
  - Sustain *all* 11th grade students' access to the STAMP test in FY25
    - Anticipated: An increase of 63 students ($22.40/unit) in a Level 4 class
      - Increase of 37 students in modern world language
      - Addition of Latin students

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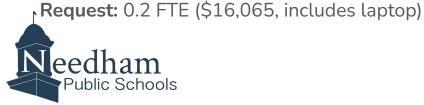
World Languages: American Sign Language, Grade 8

Why: ASL provides students with a unique language learning experience. As students develop novice range language skills through interpretation and signing, students:

- Increase their cultural perspective taking, empathy and understanding of the Deaf Community
- Develop an understanding of ableism
- Acquire skills to dismantle barriers and practice allyship

Context: The Needham Education Foundation has generously funded 2 years of American Sign Language (ASL) at Pollard Middle School as part of the 8th grade elective rotation.

- The original grant request was submitted in response to strong student interest and co-written by Elizabeth Zajac, Tamatha Bibbo and a 12th grade student enrolled in the INDEX World Languages program

What: After two years of successful implementation and continued student enthusiasm for ASL at Pollard, World Languages seeks to sustain access to programming in SY24-25

Request: 0.2 FTE ($16,065, includes laptop)

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Web Content Filtering Software

- **Why:** In order to ensure quality learning, we seek to leverage technologies to support the diverse needs of our students by optimising our responsiveness to various online behaviors.
- **What is it?** A comprehensive web filtering/monitoring software to support our one-to-one device initiative, which would provide the ability for us to:
  - Dynamically monitor and proactively block websites/apps that we deem inappropriate or unsafe for student use when using a NPS-issued device or account by grade level
  - Monitor student activity including websites they visit, applications they use and files they download
  - Provide reports to teachers, administrators and parents that show student activity and potential safety concerns, enabling appropriate intervention in the moment as necessary.
- **Based on feedback from:** Parents, Administrators, Teachers, Media/Digital Learning Staff, IT Staff
- Request of **$20,000** would support a *pilot* of a tool for SY24-25 at the K-5 level

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Software License Fee Increase (level service)

Request: An amount of **$4,804** distributed across each school's instructional software and license accounts would be beneficial to maintaining level service of K-12 educational technology and media subscriptions.

- Based on previous years, we anticipate an increase of **$15,000** for SY24-25, however we are requesting **$4804** due to anticipated cost savings from renegotiated contracts, services no longer needed, etc.
- Currently undergoing review of whole department expenditures as part of my Entry Plan to determine other potential savings, including re-negotiating contracts based on usage, curriculum objectives and need.

Responsive Classroom

- **Responsive Classroom** is an approach that teachers use throughout the day to support student learning and create a positive community in and beyond the classroom.
- **Responsive Classroom is endorsed by CASEL -** increases student engagement, improves academic performance, and decreases discipline problems, and leads to more high quality teaching
- **Responsive Classroom techniques promote -**
    - Learner-Centered Lessons that challenge students and promote curiosity
    - Positive Community where all students feel safe and have a sense of belonging
    - Effective Classroom Management through predictable routines and expectations
    - Developmentally Appropriate Decisions for teaching and discipline based on knowledge of students' social, emotional, and cognitive development

Responsive Classroom

- **Why Responsive Classroom?**
    - Many teachers are already trained <u>and</u> using Responsive Classroom
    - CASEL, The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, has awarded Responsive Classroom their highest designation as a <u>CASEL SELect Evidenced-Based Program</u>.
    - Identified as a K-5 Tier One Approach in the district's Social Emotional Learning and Mental Health (SELMH) Framework
- **Need for additional funding**
    - Feedback from schools indicate inconsistency with implementation of Responsive Classroom and the need for more training across all staff members
    - **Request: $22,214.00** to support leadership training, consultation, and staff training across all elementary schools in FY25

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K-8 Reading Instruction

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) created the guidance document to support schools and districts as they conduct early literacy universal screenings required by Massachusetts regulation 603 CMR 28.03 (1)(f), effective July 1, 2023 which requires that schools and districts take the following actions:

- Assess each student's reading ability from kindergarten through at least third grade at least twice per school year;
- Use a valid, developmentally appropriate, DESE-approved early literacy screening instrument;
- For students whose screening results are significantly below relevant benchmarks:
  - Determine which actions within the general education program will meet the student's needs; and
  - Within 30 school days, inform the student's parent or guardian of the screening results and the LEAs response, and offer them the opportunity for a follow-up discussion.

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Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/screening-assessments.html

K-8 Reading Instruction

Current programming:

- Software for K-2 screening was secured in FY23 and FY24
- Grade 3 screening is through a paper-pencil alternative
- Software for 6-8 screening was requested in previous years, but deferred. The software was purchased through reallocation.

$16,900 FY25 Request:

- Address inflation costs for K-2 screeners, $4100
- Purchase grade 3 screener for continuity and to meet new state requirements, $6200
- Fully fund 6-8 software screening, $6600

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Summer Programming Coordination

NPS provides targeted intervention through summer programming opportunities for students. Summer programming supports students requiring additional special education services, K-5 students that would benefit from additional literacy and math instruction according to academic data, and METCO student orientation. This past summer, we were able to support ~250 K-5 students.

$10,000 Summer Program Coordinator Stipend:

- Organize and plan meetings across 5 department directors
- Streamline parent communication and registration
- Develop systems to support transportation and meals
- Act as a liaison between other community programs and child care providers
- Ensure summer school nursing and student health records are available and adequate

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Questions?